



KEAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

An Association of Professors, Professional Staff and Librarians
Local 2187, American Federation of Teachers
Kean University, Union, N.J. 07083
Phone 908 737-3925 Fax 908 737-3929

Via email & regular mail

Ms. Ada Morell, Chair
AM Title Inc.
1338 North Avenue, 2nd Floor
Elizabeth, NJ 07208

February 28, 2012

Dear Chair Morell,

I am writing to you and the entire Kean University Board of Trustees to alert you to serious irregularities in the Board majority's vote to retain President Dawood Farahi despite the overwhelming evidence of his own false representation of his academic credentials. I am also writing to demand that the Board of Trustees conduct a re-vote on President Farahi's status at its regularly scheduled meeting of March 5, in light of the disturbing revelations outlined below.

Our Union has confirmed that Trustee Linda Lewis has been employed by Kean University as an adjunct instructor since 2005. Records show that she has taught at least one section of GE 1000 – Transition to Kean, the class formerly known as Freshman Seminar, in almost every academic year since 2005. This means that she was voting on the employment status of the very person, President Farahi, who determines her own employment status at Kean University. **Her vote to retain the President is wholly de-legitimized by this blatant and egregious conflict of interest.** Certainly she should have at the very least recused herself from the vote. Her disregard of proper conduct calls into question the legitimacy of the entire vote itself, a concern reinforced by the following.

You are certainly aware that two Trustees were not in attendance at the meeting. Only one, Trustee Gene Enlow, was linked into the proceedings via a telephone connection on speakerphone; the other, Trustee David Halpern, did not have such a connection, and did not participate in the vote. Further, due to the intense reactions of outrage of the audience to individual Trustee's votes, the crowd noise was so loud as to drown out the verbal response of several Trustees, raising questions as to whether the votes of some Trustees were correctly recorded.

In addition, multiple sources have confirmed that State Senator Raymond Lesniak was on campus the night of the Board meeting and was briefly present during the Board's executive session. This raises concerns that the Senator may have exerted undue political influence over the Board's deliberations on the fate of President Farahi.

All of these factors put together have the distinct possibility of altering the outcome of the vote and thus require that the vote be conducted again in a manner open to all Board members and free from conflicts of interest.

You should also be aware that faculty members have already contacted the New Jersey Ethics Commission to report these and other issues. Upon hearing of the charges, the ethics officer immediately decided to open an investigation into the conflict of interest of Trustee Linda Lewis.

Lastly, in case the Board majority really believes that its decision will not negatively impact Kean University, I am providing further details about the academic integrity scandal surrounding Col. Henry Zimon, the disgraced former president of Albright College, whose case I cited in my original letter to the board dated November 29, 2011. It provides a chilling example of how a college can suffer in all aspects when an academic integrity scandal involving its leadership is allowed to fester. The full details are available at the website "Zimon is a fraud" at the following link:

<http://www.zimonisafraud.com/>

The following excerpt from the website shows the consequences that will befall Kean University if the Board majority does not act quickly to restore institutional integrity:

*Col Zimon's ouster long sought by several faculty members after his academic fraud was exposed in 1999 brings closure to a festering controversy that had debilitated the institution and was a source of acute embarrassment to students and faculty at the college. **Fundraising declined precipitously during Col Zimon's tenure as the college lost enormous credibility within academe and alumni, foundations and others became leery about lending their support to the institution** [emphasis added]. Col Zimon's legacy at the institution included efforts at fudging institutional rankings and censoring the campus newspaper, The Albrightian, for reporting on the college's academic decline under his watch.*

Given the serious concerns laid out above, it is incumbent on the Board of Trustees to conduct a re-vote on President Farahi's leadership at the March 5th meeting.

Sincerely,

James A. Castiglione, Ph.D.
President, Kean Federation of Teachers, Local 2187

Cc: Kean University Board of Trustees
Mr. Robert Fagella, Esq

Enclosures:

- 1) Documentation of adjunct teaching assignments of Trustee Linda Lewis.
- 2) Front page of website "Zimon is a fraud"